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## Connecting

March 30, 2021

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this the 30<sup>th</sup> day of 2021,

A cardinal rule when working an AP desk on April Fool's Day: Don't be pranked!

Our colleague **Mark Mittelstadt** recounts an instance in AP lore when that rule was not followed. It involves a student newspaper whose editor then is now president of Poynter Institute for Media Studies, Iowa's largest newspaper and an AP desk editor working alone on a weekend.

So Connecting asks – were you ever involved in being pranked on April Fool's Day? Either working at AP or a newspaper or broadcast desk? Send along your story.

**Today, Connecting hosts a virtual panel event on the newest AP book, "From Hell to Hollywood: The Incredible Journey of AP Photographer Nick Ut,"** written by Hal Buell. The virtual panel will include Nick, Hal, and Peter Arnett, who contributed an Afterword to the project. There may be one or two special guests participating as well. The event begins at 3pm EST and will last approximately 30 minutes, followed by a

Q&A session. All are welcome to join the virtual discussion, which can be accessed via ZOOM on any desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone.

Click [here](#) for the link to log in.

ID: 431-790-0349

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

# The time AP got April Fooled



**Mark Mittelstadt (Email)** - Forty-one years ago readers of an Iowa City newspaper got a surprise.

Instead of their usual Daily Iowan, they received what appeared to be a copy of the state's largest newspaper, The Des Moines Register. Even more startling was the banner headline: "POPE TO FLY OVER IOWA CITY."

As outlandish as that might have seemed, it was not out of the question. Six months earlier Pope John Paul II had visited Iowa, speaking to congregants at a small Catholic

parish then celebrating Mass for an estimated 340,000 people at an outdoor agricultural museum near Des Moines, Living History Farms. The visit generated extensive coverage throughout Iowa and around the world.

Even the sub-head and first few paragraphs of the April 1980 story seemed to lend credence. The pope's trip to Des Moines on Oct. 4, 1979, was prompted by a farmer inviting him to his small church in Cumming, Iowa. So, too, was the supposed fly-over: "Letter from 'Sandy' spurs papal swing," an apparent reference to then University of Iowa President Willard "Sandy" Boyd.

"In what is believed to be the first papal visit of its kind, Vatican officials have told The Rooster that the pope will fly over Iowa City enroute to his holy summer vacation in the South Pacific," went the lead by "Religious Writer" William Bimbo. "The pontiff will be flying at altitudes topping 10,000 feet throughout his holiday trip to Midway Island, an unidentified Vatican source said, but his plane will 'part the clouds' just long enough to catch a glimpse of the city that his papal Highness calls, 'The town that begins where the Coralville Strip left off.'"

Readers by then likely were tipped off that what they were holding was a joke, an elaborate April Fool's prank crafted by The Daily Iowan. The general circulation newspaper is published by students at the University of Iowa and known for its April Fool's mischief.

The typography, layout and features made the send-up look very much like the real thing, but a closer look made it clear it was not The Des Moines Register. This was The Des Moines Rooster. "THE NEWSPAPER IOWA WRAPS FISH IN" the tagline read instead of the usual "THE NEWSPAPER IOWA DEPENDS UPON." The faux copyright was Des Moines Rooster and Trivia Company, not Des Moines Register and Tribune Company.

The fly-over byline was a humorous allusion to William Simbro, an ordained Methodist minister who covered religion for the Register and was one of its lead writers for the papal visit. The April Fool's edition mentioned the Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa, suggesting the route would cross the upper tip of Idaho, a state occasionally confused with Iowa. "RAGBRAI - LIX: Pack a potato peeler" was credited to John Carcass, a jab at RAGBRAI co-founder John Karras.

Even Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Frank Miller was not off limits. In 1963 Miller won for an editorial cartoon showing a world destroyed by nuclear war, with one ragged figure saying to another, "I said -- we sure settled that dispute, didn't we!" The Rooster's version, by Fink Miller, showed a similarly destroyed globe but with a New York Yankees baseball player standing on top, a nod to Miller's frequent claim that an official World Series must have the New York Yankees in it. The Rooster's caption: "I said -- well at least it was an official nuclear war!"

The two-page edition was the brainchild of Daily Iowan editor-in-chief Neil Brown (left) along with two of his top editors who saw it as a way to poke fun at the Register's 1979 papal visit coverage. Some media critics viewed the daily coverage of every little development for



months and then the event itself as over-the-top.

While the pope would not be dipping his wings over Iowa City, the papal spoof flew over the head of an Associated Press editor 113 miles away in Des Moines.

"It was a hilarious spoof about the media getting gaga about the pope's visit," said Brown, who also covered the pope's visit. "The AP wire thought it was real, so it moved the story and had to issue a huge correction."

The real Des Moines Register thought the edition was so well done it reprinted it on an inside page days later. A Des Moines AP desk editor working alone that weekend saw the Rooster reprint, thought it was real and wrote a short item leading a drive-time broadcast split. Minutes later a member alerted him to the hoax. The staffer attempted to delete the story, committing two cardinal AP sins in the process: killing a story on his own without consulting superiors, and not creating paperwork required whenever AP issues a CORRECTIVE or BULLETIN KILL. The employee was confronted about it a day or two later and shortly thereafter became an ex-employee.

Brown said it was never the Daily Iowan's intent to prank the wire. That didn't mean they didn't get a kick out of it. "We loved that," he said. "Are you kidding? Oh my God, entirely. This was like a dream come true." Brown went on to become editor of The Tampa Bay Times, where the paper won six Pulitzers. He is now president of the Poynter Institute for Media Studies.

John Lumpkin, then AP's chief of bureau for Iowa and Nebraska, said he learned of the staffer's foul-up when another news organization called him for a quote. "It's an episode I would prefer to forget," he told Connecting.

When I joined AP in Des Moines 10 months later, the mishandling of the prank was repeated to me by the news editor, night supervisor and others. It was drummed into me as an example of what not to do when there's a problem with the news reports.

It used to be AP practice to send an all-points advisory telling bureaus to watch out for attempts to fool the news cooperative around April 1.

John Daniszewski, AP's vice president and editor at large for standards, told Connecting the company no longer does that as a matter of routine. "Not that it would not be a good idea to revive the practice," he said. "We are probably tempting fate."

## Describing What's Happening at the US Border

**Larry Blasko (Email)** - Applause for John Daniszewski's memo (see Monday's Connecting) on slapping a "crisis" tag on the U.S. southern border situation. It feels good to see the AP being the AP.

I shared it with my nearly-adult children and their spouses, all in their 40s, and said:

*"Folks,*

*Read down for the controversy about AP not labeling the southern border situation a "crisis." Although calling it a crisis pleases the pro-Trump crowd, I suspect the real motivation for beating the "crisis" drum is the pro-click crowd.*

*In a world where any medium's audience can fluctuate by the minute, having a large enough audience to interest advertisers is survival. "Crisis" is likely to attract more clicks than "stubborn long-term problem."*

*Also, for that part of the audience that fears and dislikes Spanish-speaking immigrants, "crisis" gives them a hot-air support for the racist balloons they use to flee their own shortcomings.*

*Larry"*

Again, thanks to John for steering the S.S. AP in the middle channel of this roaring instant media river.

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**Ed McCullough (Email)** - Did AP reporters and editors ever use the word "crisis" to describe the mass human migrations from Syria to Western Europe around 2015? To Colombia from Venezuela these past several years? To neighboring countries from Rwanda in the 1990s? To the U.S. from Mexico and Central America before the 1986 amnesty that was supposed to secure the southern border? What is different now?

John Daniszewski, AP Vice President for Standards, writes that the "classic" dictionary definition of crisis, "a time or state of affairs involving great danger or trouble, often one which threatens to result in unpleasant consequences (an economic crisis) , "does not fit." Yes it does, exactly.

In Daniszewski's explanation, the self-same migrants face humanitarian "crises" at home. But when they arrive in numbers that overwhelm U.S. states' capacity to feed, shelter and educate them, and adjudicate their cases, that's apparently something other than a crisis. Well, then, how about "catastrophe," as Texas Gov. Greg Abbott calls it."

AP reporters and editors don't ever have to use either word. Accurately describing events usually is enough. But if "crisis" becomes OK only after the Biden administration uses that word, the current sensitivity seems like pandering.

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**Lyle Price (Email)** - Wow! I am endlessly intrigued by word usage and by memos-- and the March 29 Connecting items re the AP standard of eschewing the use of "crisis" to describe the current situation involving the USA's southern border offer splendid examples of both.

However, whether wisely, cowardly or due to brainlessness (I'm unable to discern which word might be most apt), I shall try to restrain myself from offering an opinion as to at what stage something evolves into--or devolves from--being a crisis. But were I still a member of the working press, I believe I'd henceforth strive to never use that overworked word unless it's in a quote.

It also crosses my mind to ponder whether it'd be journalistically ethical or wise for someone at AP or elsewhere in the media to ask a news source whether they'd describe a situation as a "crisis"--and then to quote them as saying (or not saying) so!

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**Dave Tomlin (Email)** - Regarding the "crisis" conversation, I guess it's a duty of news writers to overthink proper usage of freighted words. So I came across this line in a recent Atlantic piece on how the wretched excesses of elite prep schools are worsening educational inequality: "When a crisis goes on long enough, it no longer seems like a crisis. It is merely a fact."

## Connecting mailbox

*Story behind her photo with most famous man in world*



**Susan Ragan** ([Email](#)) - I was doing stills for a "B" movie, Body and Soul, by Menachem Golan an Israeli director who made B horror flicks, that had the most famous man in the world in a cameo. He was telling me stories and jokes all the way through it, and another photographer said he'd shoot a picture. Of course I said yes. What a great, sweet man he was. Everyone loved him. (The movie starred Jayne Kennedy, and her husband played a part, too. It was in 1980, before I got my first job at UPI in L.A.

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## ***A Reporter Looks Back: Recognition Long Overdue for Female War Reporters and Photographers*** (Radio Free Asia)

A Commentary by Dan Southerland ([Email](#))

During the Vietnam War female war reporters and photographers performed admirably but often received less recognition than their male counterparts.

Elizabeth Becker, who reported on the war in Cambodia in the early 1970s, has written a new book that sets the record straight.

In her book titled *You Don't Belong Here: How Three Women Rewrote the Story of War*, Becker focuses on two female war correspondents and a female photographer.

I should state early on that I knew both of the war reporters as well as the author, whom I consider a friend.

I only wish that I'd had a chance to meet the photographer, a French citizen named Catherine Leroy who loved nothing better than to be taking photos of U.S. Marines in the middle of a firefight.

Read more [here](#).

***Connecting sky shot – for when you need a lift...***





**Mark Mittelstadt** ([Email](#)) - If you could put tonight's sunset in a bottle to be uncorked any time you needed a lift, you would. The view outside of Tucson, Az.

## One year of World War II on Deadline



**George Hicks of NBC in June 1944 (Naval History and Heritage Command)**

**By Marc Lancaster**

On March 29, 2020, the first post from World War II on Deadline went live. That inaugural entry, the story of Newsweek correspondent Kenneth Crawford's experience at Utah Beach on D-Day, was the product of research I'd done a few years earlier but hadn't had an opportunity to publish anywhere.

What better time than a pandemic that might keep us inside for a few weeks — heck, maybe even a few months! — than to find an outlet for those stories I'd been accumulating?

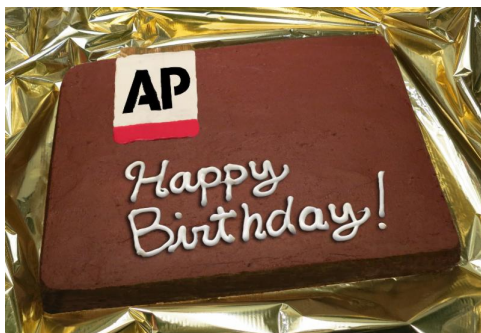
A year later, the website and its email newsletter and Facebook page have featured about two hundred stories from the war, from an examination of how historic events were covered in the moment to biographical sketches of the men and women who did that reporting and photography decades ago.

Though there is no original addition to that collection today, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge a few key correspondents with March 29 birthdays: AP correspondent Charles McMurtry (1905), who suffered severe burns in a kamikaze attack while covering the Pacific war; the Scotsman Norman Clark (1910), who covered the war in North Africa, France, Germany and beyond for the London-based News Chronicle; and legendary Stars and Stripes editor and Andy Rooney running mate Oram "Bud" Hutton (1913).

Perhaps next year on day I'll go a bit more in-depth on one of them, but in the meantime I thought I'd look back and see which posts on the various platforms have been read the most over the past year. The top five on each are all different. If you're among those who has read them — thank you! If not, perhaps you might want to check out something you've missed:

Read more [here](#). Shared by Paul Albright.

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Sarah Nordgren – [snordgren@ap.org](mailto:snordgren@ap.org)

## Welcome to Connecting



Dan Southerland - [dansoutherland66@gmail.com](mailto:dansoutherland66@gmail.com)

## Stories of interest

*Ample opportunities for viewers to follow Chauvin trial* (WRAL)

By DAVID BAUDER, AP Media Writer

NEW YORK — American news consumers have a multitude of options to follow the trial of a former Minneapolis police officer accused in the death of George Floyd, which began on Monday with a chilling rerun.

Opening the case in a Minnesota courtroom, prosecutor Jerry Blackwell relied heavily on video from last May showing white former officer Derek Chauvin pressing his knee onto the neck of Floyd, a Black man. The widely seen video launched a worldwide reckoning on race.

Blackwell and defense attorney Eric Nelson's arguments were shown live on at least 12 TV networks: ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox News Channel, MSNBC, HLN, Black News Channel, CourtTV, CSPAN, the Law & Crime Network and Newsmax.

Video also streamed on affiliated livestreams for many of those networks, along with TheRoot.com and PBS' "NewsHour." Websites for The New York Times and Washington Post streamed it on their homepages, and The Associated Press offered its subscribers a livestream.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***Three groundbreaking journalists saw the Vietnam War differently. It's no coincidence they were women.*** (Washington Post)

**By Margaret Sullivan**  
Media columnist

Frances FitzGerald paid her own way into Vietnam. She was an "on spec" reporter with no editor to guide her, no office to support her, and no promise that anyone would publish what she wrote about the war.

She knocked out her first article on a blue Olivetti portable typewriter she had carried from New York and mailed it the cheap and slow way from a post office in the heart of Saigon's French quarter to the Village Voice, nearly 9,000 miles away.

It arrived, and on April 21, 1966, the Voice published FitzGerald's indictment of the chaotic U.S. war policy.

"The result was a highly original piece written in the style of an outsider, someone who asked different questions and admitted when she didn't have answers," wrote Elizabeth Becker in her new book, "You Don't Belong Here: How Three Women Rewrote the Story of War," which celebrates the work of FitzGerald, Kate Webb and Catherine Leroy.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Susana Hayward.

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## ***Get to Know the Newsrooms Focused on Elevating Latinx Voices in the U.S.*** (Nieman Reports)

By **SOFIA CERDA CAMPERO**

Can star player Marco Fabián revive the Union’s Latino fan base? Show me some cariño (affection), they say.”

That was the headline for an April 2019 Spanish-language multimedia feature in The Philadelphia Inquirer about Mexican soccer player Marco Fabián, star of the Philadelphia Union team, which over the previous nine years had dropped most of its Hispanic players.

In the piece, Inquirer staffer Jesenia De Moya Correa unpacks, through interviews with several Spanish-speaking sources of different ages and nationalities, what having a Mexican player on the Philadelphia squad means to the city’s Latinx communities. It wasn’t the first time the Inquirer had covered Fabián or the local league. However, it was the first time that the story was told through voices from the community.

Read more [here](#).

## **Today in History - March 30, 2021**



**By The Associated Press**

Today is Tuesday, March 30, the 89th day of 2021. There are 276 days left in the year.

### **Today’s Highlight in History:**

On March 30, 1981, President Ronald Reagan was shot and seriously injured outside a Washington, D.C. hotel by John W. Hinckley, Jr.; also wounded were White House

press secretary James Brady, Secret Service agent Timothy McCarthy and a District of Columbia police officer, Thomas Delahanty.

### **On this date:**

In 1822, Florida became a United States territory.

In 1842, Dr. Crawford W. Long of Jefferson, Georgia, first used ether as an anesthetic during an operation to remove a patient's neck tumor.

In 1867, U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward reached agreement with Russia to purchase the territory of Alaska for \$7.2 million, a deal ridiculed by critics as "Seward's Folly."

In 1870, the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which prohibited denying citizens the right to vote and hold office on the basis of race, was declared in effect by Secretary of State Hamilton Fish.

In 1975, as the Vietnam War neared its end, Communist forces occupied the city of Da Nang.

In 1987, at the 59th Academy Awards, "Platoon" was named best picture; Marlee Matlin received best actress for "Children of a Lesser God" and Paul Newman was honored as best actor for "The Color of Money."

In 1999, Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic (sloh-BOH'-dahn mee-LOH'-shuh-vich) insisted that NATO attacks stop before he moved toward peace, declaring his forces ready to fight "to the very end." NATO answered with new resolve to wreck his military with a relentless air assault.

In 2004, in a reversal, President George W. Bush agreed to let National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice testify publicly and under oath before an independent panel investigating the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

In 2006, American reporter Jill Carroll, a freelancer for The Christian Science Monitor, was released after 82 days as a hostage in Iraq.

In 2009, President Barack Obama asserted unprecedented government control over the auto industry, rejecting turnaround plans from General Motors and Chrysler and raising the prospect of controlled bankruptcy for either ailing auto giant.

In 2010, President Barack Obama signed a single measure sealing his health care overhaul and making the government the primary lender to students by cutting banks out of the process.

In 2015, German officials confirmed that Germanwings co-pilot Andreas Lubitz was once diagnosed with suicidal tendencies and received lengthy psychotherapy before receiving his pilot's license; they believed Lubitz deliberately smashed his Airbus A320 into the French Alps, killing 150 people. Comedy Central announced that Trevor Noah, a 31-year-old comedian from South Africa, would succeed Jon Stewart as host of "The Daily Show."

Ten years ago: A top Libyan official, Foreign Minister Moussa Koussa, defected to Britain, dealing a blow to leader Moammar Gadhafi. Tilikum, the killer whale that had drowned trainer Dawn Brancheau in 2010 at SeaWorld in Orlando, Florida, resumed performing for the first time since the woman's death.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama commuted the prison sentences of 61 drug offenders, including more than a third serving life sentences. A Hennepin County, Minnesota, prosecutor announced that two Minneapolis police officers involved in the Nov. 2015 fatal shooting of Jamar Clark, a Black man, would not face criminal charges, a decision that drew outrage from community members.

One year ago: Florida authorities arrested a megachurch pastor after they said he held two Sunday services with hundreds in attendance in violation of coronavirus restrictions. (The charges were later dropped.) A Navy hospital ship arrived in New York City to help relieve the coronavirus crisis gripping the city's hospitals. (President Donald Trump said a week later that he would allow coronavirus patients to be treated aboard the ship in addition to patients who did not have the virus.) Macy's, Kohl's and Gap Inc. all said they would stop paying tens of thousands of employees who were thrown out of work when the chains temporarily closed their stores because of the pandemic. Bill Withers, who wrote and sang a string of soulful songs in the 1970s that included "Lean on Me" and "Ain't No Sunshine," died at 81 in Los Angeles.

Today's Birthdays: Game show host Peter Marshall is 95. Actor John Astin is 91. Actor-director Warren Beatty is 84. Rock musician Graeme Edge (The Moody Blues) is 80. Rock musician Eric Clapton is 76. Actor Justin Deas is 73. Actor Paul Reiser is 65. Rap artist MC Hammer is 59. Singer Tracy Chapman is 57. Actor Ian Ziering (EYE'-an ZEER'-ing) is 57. TV personality Piers Morgan is 56. Rock musician Joey Castillo is 55. Actor Donna D'Errico is 53. Singer Celine Dion is 53. TV personality/producer Richard Rawlings is 52. Actor Mark Consuelos is 50. Actor Bahar Soomekh is 46. Actor Jessica Cauffiel is 45. Singer Norah Jones is 42. Actor Fiona Gubelmann is 41. Actor Katy Mixon is 40. Actor Jason Dohring is 39. Country singer Justin Moore is 37. Actor Tessa Ferrer is 35. Country singer Thomas Rhett is 31. Rapper NF is 30.

## Got a story or photos to share?

Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

Here are some suggestions:

- **Second chapters** - You finished a great career. Now tell us about your second (and third and fourth?) chapters of life.

- **Spousal support** - How your spouse helped in supporting your work during your AP career.

- **My most unusual story** - tell us about an unusual, off the wall story that you covered.

- **"A silly mistake that you make"**- a chance to 'fess up with a memorable mistake in your journalistic career.

- **Multigenerational AP families** - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.

- **Volunteering** - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.

- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?

- **Connecting "selfies"** - a word and photo self-profile of you and your career, and what you are doing today. Both for new members and those who have been with us a while.

- **Most unusual place a story assignment took you.**

**Paul Stevens**

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